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Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole

Draft report

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Review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the twelve critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action

Further actions and initiatives for overcoming obstacles to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

Addendum

1. The Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole considered paragraphs 8, 9, 11, 20, 21, 23, 25 and 27 of the proposed outcome document of the twenty-third special session (A/S-23/2/Add.2 (Part II)) at its _____ meeting on 9 June 2000.

2. At the same meeting, the Committee approved the following amendments and recommended the paragraphs, as amended, to the special session for adoption:

Health

*8. *Achievements*: Programmes have been implemented to create awareness among policy makers and planners of the need for health programmes to cover all aspects of women's health throughout women's life cycle, which have contributed to an increase in life expectancy in many countries. There is: increased attention to high mortality rates among women and girls as a result of malaria, tuberculosis, water-borne diseases, communicable and diarrhoeal diseases and malnutrition; increased attention to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights of women as contained in paragraphs 94 and 95 of the Platform for Action, as well as in some countries increased emphasis on implementing paragraph 96 of the Platform for Action; increased knowledge and use of family planning and contraceptive methods as well as increased awareness among men of their responsibility in family planning and contraceptive methods and their use; increased attention to sexually transmitted infections, including human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency

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syndrome (HIV/AIDS) among women and girls and methods to protect against such infections; increased attention to breast-feeding, nutrition, infants' and mothers' health; the introduction of a gender perspective in health and health-related educational and physical activities, and gender-specific prevention and rehabilitation programmes on substance abuse, including tobacco, drugs and alcohol; increased attention to women's mental health, health conditions at work, environmental considerations and recognition of the specific health needs of older women. The General Assembly at its twenty-first special session (30 June to 2 July 1999) reviewed achievements and adopted key actions in the field of women's health for further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

*9. *Obstacles*: Worldwide, the gap between and within rich and poor countries with respect to infant mortality and maternal mortality and morbidity rates, as well as with respect to measures addressing the health of women and girls, given their special vulnerability regarding sexually transmitted infections, including human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and other sexual and reproductive health problems, together with endemic, infectious and communicable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhoeal and water-borne diseases and chronic non-transmissible diseases remains unacceptable. In some countries, such endemic, infectious and communicable diseases, continue to take a toll on women and girls. In other countries, non-communicable diseases, such as cardiopulmonary diseases, hypertension and degenerative diseases, remain among the major causes of mortality and morbidity among women. Despite progress in some countries, the rates of maternal mortality and morbidity remain unacceptably high in most countries. Investment in essential obstetric care remains insufficient in many countries. The absence of a holistic approach to health and health care for women and girls based on women's right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health throughout the life-cycle has constrained progress. Some women continue to encounter barriers to their right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The predominant focus of health-care systems on treating illness rather than maintaining optimal health also prevents a holistic approach. There is, in some countries, insufficient attention to the role of economic and social determinants of health. A lack of access to clean water, inadequate nutrition, safe sanitation and of gender-specific health research and technology, as well as insufficient gender sensitivity in the provision of health information and health care and health services, including those related to environmental and occupational health hazards, affect women in developing and developed countries. Poverty and the lack of development continue to affect the capacity of many developing countries to provide and expand quality health care. A shortage of financial and human resources, in particular in developing countries, as well as restructuring of the health sector and/or the increasing trend towards privatization of health-care systems in some cases, has resulted in poor quality, reduced and insufficient health-care services, and has also led to less attention to the health of the most vulnerable groups of women. Obstacles such as unequal power relationships between women and men, where women often do not have the power to insist on safe and responsible sex practices, and a lack of communication and understanding between men and women on women's health needs, *inter alia*, endanger women's health, particularly by increasing their susceptibility to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and affect women's access to health care and education, especially in relation to prevention. Adolescents, particularly

adolescent girls continue to lack access to sexual and reproductive health information, education and services. Women who are recipients of health care are frequently not treated with respect or guaranteed privacy and confidentiality, and do not receive full information about options and services available. In some cases, health services and workers still do not conform to human rights and to ethical, professional and gender-sensitive standards in the delivery of women's health services, nor do they ensure responsible, voluntary and informed consent. There continues to be a lack of information on availability and access to appropriate, affordable, primary health-care services of high quality, including sexual and reproductive health care, sufficient attention to maternal and emergency obstetric care as well as a lack of prevention, screening and treatment for breast, cervical and ovarian cancers and osteoporosis. The testing and development of male contraceptives is still insufficient. While some measures have been taken in some countries, the actions contained in paragraphs 106 (j) and 106 (k) of the Platform for Action regarding the health impact of unsafe abortion and the need to reduce the recourse to abortion have not been fully implemented. The rising incidence of tobacco use among women, particularly young women, has increased their risk of cancer and other serious diseases as well as gender-specific risks from tobacco and environmental tobacco smoke.

11. *Obstacles*: Women continue to be victims of various forms of violence. Inadequate understanding of the root causes of all forms of violence against women and girls hinders efforts to eliminate such violence. There is a lack of comprehensive programmes dealing with the perpetrators, including programmes, where appropriate, which would enable them to solve problems without violence. Inadequate data on violence further impede informed policy-making and analysis. Socio-cultural attitudes which are discriminatory and economic inequalities reinforce women's subordinate place in society. This makes women and girls vulnerable to many forms of violence, such as physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation. In many countries, a coordinated multidisciplinary approach to responding to violence which includes the health system, workplaces, the media, the education system and the justice system is still limited. Domestic violence, including sexual violence in marriage, is still treated as a private matter in some countries. Insufficient awareness of the consequences of domestic violence, how to prevent it and the rights of victims still exists. Although improving, the legal and legislative measures, especially in the criminal justice area, to eliminate different forms of violence against women and children, including domestic violence and child pornography, are weak in many countries. Prevention strategies also remain fragmented and reactive and there is a lack of programmes on these issues. It is also noted that, in some countries, problems have arisen from the use of new information and communication technologies for trafficking in women and children and for the purposes of all forms of economic and sexual exploitation.

23. *Obstacles*: Negative, violent and/or degrading images of women, including pornography and stereotyped portrayals, have increased in different forms using new communication technologies in some instances, and bias against women remains in the media. Poverty, the lack of access and opportunities, illiteracy, lack of computer literacy and language barriers, prevent some women from using the information and

communication technologies, including the Internet. Development of and access to the Internet infrastructure is especially limited in developing countries and particularly for women.

25. *Obstacles*: There is still a lack of public awareness about environmental risks faced by women and of the benefits of gender equality for promoting environmental protection. Women's limited access to technical skills, resources and information, in particular in developing countries, owing to, among others, gender inequality, have impeded women's effective participation in decision-making, regarding the sustainable environment, including at the international level. Research, action, targeted strategies and public awareness remain limited regarding the differential impacts and implications of environmental problems for women and men. Real solutions to environmental problems, including environmental degradation, need to address the root causes of these problems, such as foreign occupation. Environmental policies and programmes lack a gender perspective and fail to take into account women's roles and contributions to environmental sustainability.

Human rights and the girl child

*20. *Achievements*: Legal reforms have been undertaken to prohibit all forms of discrimination and discriminatory provisions have been eliminated in civil, penal and personal status law governing marriage and family relations, all forms of violence, women's property and ownership rights and women's political, work and employment rights. Steps have been taken to realize women's de facto enjoyment of their human rights through the creation of an enabling environment, including the adoption of policy measures, the improvement of enforcement and monitoring mechanisms and the implementation of legal literacy and awareness campaigns at all levels. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has been ratified or acceded to by 165 countries and its full implementation has been promoted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention, allowing women claiming to be victims of a violation of any of the rights set forth in the Convention by a State party to submit their claims to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and non-governmental organizations contributed by raising awareness and generating support for its adoption. Women's NGOs have also contributed to raising awareness that women's rights are human rights They also generated support for the inclusion of a gender perspective in the elaboration of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Progress has also been made to integrate the human rights of women and mainstream a gender perspective into the United Nations system, including into the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the Commission on Human Rights.

*21. *Obstacles*: Gender discrimination and all other forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance continue to threaten women's enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. In situations of armed conflict and foreign occupation, the human rights of women have been extensively violated. Even though a number of countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the goal of universal ratification by the year 2000 has not been achieved, and there continues to be a large number of reservations to the Convention. While there is an increasing acceptance of gender equality, many countries have not yet implemented

fully the provisions of the Convention. Discriminatory legislation as well as harmful traditional and customary practices and negative stereotyping of women and men still persist. Family, civil, penal, labour and commercial laws or codes, or administrative rules and regulations, still have not fully integrated a gender perspective. Legislative and regulatory gaps, as well as lack of implementation and enforcement of legislation and regulations, perpetuate *de jure* as well as de facto inequality and discrimination, and in a few cases, new laws discriminating against women have been introduced. In many countries, women have insufficient access to the law, resulting from illiteracy, lack of legal literacy, information and resources, insensitivity and gender bias, and lack of awareness of the human rights of women by law enforcement officials and the judiciary, who in many cases fail to respect the human rights of women and the dignity and worth of the human person. There is insufficient recognition of women's and girls' reproductive rights, as well as barriers to their full enjoyment of those rights, which embrace certain human rights as defined in paragraph 95 of the Beijing Platform for Action. Some women and girls continue to encounter barriers to justice and the enjoyment of their human rights because of such factors as their race, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability or socio-economic class or because they are indigenous people, migrants, including women migrant workers, displaced women or refugees.

*27. *Obstacles*: The persistence of poverty, discriminatory attitudes towards women and girls, negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls as well as negative stereotyping of girls and boys which limit girls' potential, and inadequate awareness of the specific situation of the girl child, child labour, and the heavy burden of domestic responsibilities on girls, inadequate nutrition and access to health services, and lack of finance which often prevent girls from pursuing and completing their education and training, have contributed to a lack of opportunities and possibilities for girls to become confident and self-reliant, and independent adults. Poverty, lack of parental support and guidance, lack of information and education, abuse and all forms of exploitation of, and violence against the girl child, in many cases result in unwanted pregnancies and transmission of HIV, which may also lead to a restriction on educational opportunities. Programmes for the girl child were hindered by a lack of or an insufficient allocation of financial and human resources. There were few established national mechanisms to implement policies and programmes for the girl child and, in some cases, coordination among responsible institutions was insufficient. The increased awareness of the health needs, including the sexual and reproductive health needs, of adolescents has not yet resulted in sufficient provision of necessary information and services. Despite advances in legal protection, there is increased sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of the girl child. Adolescents continue to lack the education and service needed to enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality.